

Reconstruction era of the united states and new york times

[History](#)



Allison Hwang Swanson 10: 30 11/16/2012 Reconstruction's Failure Although the Civil War finally managed to come to a close, the end of the war wasn't exactly met with celebration. Instead, the Civil War brought up many new problems that were left unresolved. In order to solve these problems, the congress took responsibility and worked its way to "reconstruct" our nation. The main purpose of the "Congressional Reconstruction" was to 'establish and protect the citizenship rights of the freedmen'.

However, the Congress' Reconstruction efforts did not last too long and came to an end by the year of 1877. The main reasons for the failure of the reconstruction efforts were due to the conflicting views and factors upon the purpose of reconstruction. There were much political opposition from the north and the south as well as from the republicans and the democrats, the entire nation was facing economic hardships, and the attempt to place the freedmen in the same social level as the white southerners caused so much tension that the efforts of the Congress' Reconstruction gradually failed.

Even though the 13th and the 14th Amendments were ratified in 1866, which ensured equal rights of all citizens, many of the white population continued to treat the former slaves with inequality. Ignorance was one of the biggest factors that led to the failure of the efforts of the congress reconstruction. Although the former slaves were not granted liberty and freedom, they were still treated with inequality because many of the white men continued to believe that the black men should not have the equal rights as the white men. Pennsylvania Congressman Benjamin Boyer, a Democrat, said, "it is not the complexion of the negro that degrades him.... race by nature inferior in mental caliber...the negroes are not the equals of
<https://assignbuster.com/reconstruction-era-of-the-united-states-and-new-york-times/>

white Americans, and are not entitled...to participate in the Government of this country..." In his speech, Congressman Boyer basically denies the right of the African Americans to vote simply due to his belief that black men falls short of the white and that they aren't smart enough. In the excerpt in the New York Times it reads, "'Ku Klux Klan' ...its grand purpose being to establish a nucleus around which 'the adherents of the late rebellion might safely rally. " The Ku Klux Klan was an organization that was formed in order to go against the purpose of the congress and lynch black men. Such activities were racially and violently performed, which undermined the Congress' efforts to ensure equal rights to freedmen. In the excerpts from the editorial, Atlanta News, it says, " If the white democrats of the North are men, they will not stand idly by and see us borne down by northern radicals and half-barbarous Negroes. But no matter what they may do, it is time for us to organize. " This editorial displays theracismthat was demonstrated during the 1870s.

The editorial is advocating the southern and the democratic whites to come together to stop the black. It refers to the black men as " half-barbarous negroes" which racially displays the belief of the whites of how the black men are far inferior compared to them. Racism was one of the big factors that led to the failure of the reconstruction. Another main factor that played a key role in the downfall of the congress reconstruction was the political opposition from the north and the south as well as against the democrats and the republicans. In an excerpt from The Era of Reconstruction it reads, " In May 1872....

Congress passed a general amnesty act which restored the right of office holding [and voting] to the vast majority of those who had been disqualified. " The restoration of the voting rights to the white Southerners undermined the efforts to preserve and protect the voting rights of the freedmen. This was so because when they gave back the rights to vote to the white southerners, the Congress increased the number of white voters. Thus these voters took more political positions away from the freedmen. Also in November 1874, the headline text from the New York Times read, " DEMOCRATIC VICTORY; CONGRESS TO BE DEMOCRATIC. The victory of the Democratic only further affected the downfall of the efforts of the congress' reconstructions. Their victory helped undermine the Congress' efforts to help the freedmen because the democrats were simply against the reconstruction. The opposing political viewpoints amongst the nation only further adds to why the Congress' Reconstruction efforts to ensure equal rights to the freedmen failed. The final main factor that played a big role in the downfall of the Congress' Reconstruction was the economic hardships that both the north and the south had to face after the Civil War.

The civil war left the nation in ruins as far as being economically devastated. Although the slaves were finally granted their freedom after over 200 years of fighting, they did not know what to do the moment they actually achieved their freedom. Although some blacks took advantage and became successful, there were many others who were left on the streets with no source of income to fend for themselves. In an excerpt from a book written by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois it reads, " But the decisive influence was the systematic and overwhelming economic pressure.

Negroes who wanted work must not dabble in politics... in order to earn a living, the American Negro was compelled to give up his political power. " According to Dubois, the freedmen were " convinced" to stop voting or taking part in political events because they were under economic pressure. They weren't to " dabble in politics" if they wanted to increase their income and to earn a living. The economic pressure of the slaves could also be seen in an interview with a man named John McCoy. He was born in 1838 and had lived 27 years as a slave in Texas.

In the interview he says, " Freedom wasn't no different I knows of. I works for Marse John just the same for a long time. He say one morning, "... I'll feed you and give you clothes but can't pay you no money. I ain't got none. " Humph, I didn't know nothing what money was, no how, but I knows I'll git plenty victuals to eat, so I stays..." This recollection by John McCoy displays the idea that the slaves may have even been better off to actually stay with their owners who will feed them and clothe them. This goes against the whole idea and purpose of the entire Civil War and the Congress' Reconstruction.

Due to the economic hardships during the 1870s, John decided to stay with his owner despite being granted his freedom because he did not even have knowledge as to what money was and was simply grateful for the food and the clothing that his owner would provide for him in exchange for labor. There were a lot of different reasons that led to the failure of the efforts of the Congress' Reconstruction to ensure equal rights to the freedmen. The three main reasons that affected the Congress' Reconstruction efforts the most were political oppositions, economic hardships, and racial differences.

<https://assignbuster.com/reconstruction-era-of-the-united-states-and-new-york-times/>

The constant conflicts between the different viewpoints of the democrats and the republicans undermined the purpose of the Reconstruction efforts. Racism played a big role in that the white men continued to look down on the black men and always felt superior compared to them. Economic hardships were also very important in the failure of the reconstruction efforts in that some slaves felt as though staying with their owners despite their gained freedom was better than fighting for survival alone on the streets. In the end, despite all the efforts of the congress, the reconstruction came to an end in 1877.